

gathered to make their concerns heard in free assembly, a First Amendment protection.

In Loudoun County, Virginia, a father of a young girl who had been assaulted by a biological male was arrested for speaking out against the school board's decision to hide the perpetrator's history of assault against young girls. That decision put his innocent daughter and countless other students at risk.

In my own district in Northern California, a school district was caught secretly changing a young girl's name and pronouns and even encouraging that something was wrong with her body—she was in the wrong body—filling her head with falsehoods. The counselor who encouraged this activity allegedly manipulated the young girl to keep her transitioning secret from her own mother.

In both cases, parents rightfully pushed back against these assiduous attempts of public schools to force woke gender ideology on their children.

Unfortunately, parents across the country have been met with State force when they have tried to assert their rightful place as the supreme authority in their children's lives.

The Department of Justice infamously circulated a memo calling parents who exercise these rights as “domestic terrorists.”

As Americans gradually become aware of the rotten corruption that permeates so much of our public school system, it became clear that Congressional Republicans needed to take action to support parents across the Nation and enshrine protections against government retaliation.

Last Congress, I introduced two bills: one that prohibits doctors from performing gender reassignment surgeries on minors and another allowed victims of these life-altering procedures to sue those who pushed these surgeries on them as minors.

These permanent, life-altering surgeries are being forced onto vulnerable children by radical activists. Mutilating a child's body is not medicine. It is not science. It is not affirming, nor is it care.

As we have seen in the recent exposure of the inside workings of a Missouri clinic, children manipulated into undertaking these surgeries are not informed about the life-altering damage being done to their bodies. They are being rushed through the process, and in the worst cases are outright lied to by the people who are somehow going to make their lives better or more in order, and that they know better who should be taking care of them instead of their parents when this harm is being caused.

Doing this to a child is immoral, and it should be punished with the full force of the law. Children whose lives are permanently altered due to these surgeries should be allowed to sue for damages and put parents back at their rightful place, their God-given right to

oversee their children's education, their well-being, their health, and their bodies.

OUR NATION'S SMALL COMMUNITY BANKS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to defend our community banks. For decades, we have had leftwing, out-of-control Federal administrations that have been hammering on our community banks to put them out of business. You take Sarbanes-Oxley, Dodd-Frank, or the Federal agencies who have been regulating and regulating these small community banks to the point where they either have to sell, close up, or worst, being taken over.

You see, these community banks, they are the lifeblood of small businesses, and small businesses, they are the backbone to this economy.

These community banks, they are a part of our community. They are out there in your civic and social organizations leading. Their kids go to school with your kids. They are out there on the ball fields helping coach. They are even going to church with you on Sunday.

You see, they have a vital interest in seeing the community succeed. That way they succeed. Yet, now we have this extra-woke, leftwing administration that has decided to pick winners and losers and take a different tactic.

The tactic they are taking now is to try to scare the consumer to where they will take their deposits from the community bank and move it over to one of the big banks, to where they can achieve that Big Government, be all, end all for every need and everything you ever need, and that is not America.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't be standing here, and I wouldn't be where I am today, if it weren't for my community bank.

So I have two things, Mr. Speaker: Federal Government get off the backs of these community banks. Take your leftwing ideology somewhere else.

To my fellow Americans out there: Continue to support your community bank out there. Continue to do business with them.

□ 1230

RECOGNIZING FLAU'JAE JOHNSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Flau'jae Johnson, a Savannah native and member of the LSU women's basketball team.

Flau'jae was recently named the SEC Freshman of the Year and was also selected to the 2023 SEC All-Freshman Team. She is the fourth LSU player to earn SEC Freshman of the Year honors, the first since 2009.

Flau'jae came to LSU as a highly talented freshman ranked as the No. 26 player in the Nation. She made an immediate impact in Baton Rouge, scoring 11.6 points per game and bringing down 5.9 rebounds per game. She was named SEC Freshman of the Week three times.

In her collegiate debut, she scored 14 points and grabbed 8 rebounds. She also recorded two assists, two blocks, and one steal. Through her first week of college basketball, Flau'jae scored in double figures all three games.

I congratulate Flau'jae on all of her success so far. We are excited to see everything that she will achieve.

RECOGNIZING NAT LEGREE

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Nat Legree for his retirement from Wesley Monumental United Methodist Church.

For the last 42 years, Nat has been a fixture at Wesley Monumental for his constant service to the church. Most of his work was behind the scenes but certainly did not go unnoticed as he helped prepare Wesley for worship, study, and fellowship week after week for many decades.

Nat oversaw the grounds and in recent years was responsible for maintaining the beautiful garden at Oliver Hall. Nat's dedication to his church community is admirable and has helped create a wonderful, welcoming environment for many. Wesley Monumental Church will never be the same without Nat.

On behalf of the Wesley Monumental United Methodist Church family, we are grateful to Nat for all that he has given to our church.

RECOGNIZING BART DAVIS

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Bart Davis, who was named the 2023 Georgia Farmer of the Year at this year's Georgia Ag Forecast.

Bart began farming 41 years ago in Doerun, Georgia, following the loss of his mother and father during his senior year of high school. Since then, he has grown the then 500-acre operation to encompass 5,000 acres. Today, he focuses on cotton, peanuts, and corn, while also managing a cattle operation.

Bart has made impressive strides in using precision agriculture technology to ensure the efficiency of his farm, including the use of soil moisture sensors and irrigation in the majority of his fields.

In addition to the work on his own farm, he has given back in various industry leadership roles. He has served on the Georgia Cotton Commission Board, the Georgia Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation, the National Cotton Council, and represents Georgia on Southern Cotton Growers and Cotton Incorporated.

I thank Bart for his continued dedication to his farm and to the agricultural industry.

RECOGNIZING TOM FANNING AND CHRIS WOMACK

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Tom Fanning and Chris Womack of the Southern Company.

Tom is the current chairman of the board, CEO, and president of Southern Company. For more than 42 years, Tom's excellent leadership has helped mold Southern Company into the great company it is today. I thank Tom for his decades of service to Southern Company and the First District of Georgia.

On March 31, 2023, Chris Womack will become chairman of the board, CEO, and president of Southern Company. Chris currently serves as chairman, president, and CEO of Georgia Power. Prior to those positions, Chris worked for former Congressman Leon Panetta.

I congratulate Chris and wish him well as he prepares to lead Southern Company.

IN DEFENSE OF PARENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. McCORMICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. McCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in defense of parents who have the right to guide their child's education and to know what is being taught in the classroom.

This body will soon vote on a great piece of legislation, H.R. 5, the Parental Bill of Rights. This bill puts parents in the driver's seat and makes students the priority, not bureaucrats or administrators.

It is hard to imagine who would fight against parental rights and school choice, but just the other day, Democratic legislators in my home State of Georgia were trying to stop several successful bills that expand education options for families.

Shockingly, their reasoning was that low-income families are too uneducated and poor to have a say over their own children's schooling.

If you don't believe me, here are the exact words of Georgia's 67th House District Representative just last week: "... they," meaning the parents, "are already in the lower 25th percentile, meaning a lot of those parents did not finish high school, cannot direct, and could not finish their own education."

She continues: "I am extremely concerned that we would put money in their hands, that entire piece of life in the hands of parents who are not qualified to make those decisions."

Well, I think that is nonsense. The vast majority of Americans—moms and dads and teachers and students—know that is nonsense.

History is littered by governments who thought they knew better, and that people and parents did not know better, much to the detriment of that culture and the ultimate failure of that government.

That is why I am offering two amendments to the Parental Bill of Rights.

The first one establishes the right of parents to be informed about, and consent to, participation in any non-curriculum events or activities.

We already do this for things that government schools deem important like field trips, gifted programs, individual education plans, and free and reduced lunches. I believe that parents' rights do not end at the discretion of the administration.

Unfortunately, in recent years, some school systems have used the classroom as a bully pulpit to push social engineering instead of learning environments. This is not a partisan issue, and this has got to stop. The way it stops is keeping parents informed of what happens at school.

My other amendment guarantees parents the opportunity to address their school boards regarding any violation of their rights. As we have seen too often across the country, concerned moms and dads have been silenced, thrown out, or threatened when standing up for their children. This is unacceptable.

Families need accountability in their schools and a place to make their voices heard. Fortunately, from Georgia to Virginia, from Texas to Idaho, and yes, even from California to New York, we are beginning to put students over systems and the people over a government, just like the Constitution intended.

This revolution of school choice and parental rights will help millions of families across America, and we are just getting started.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 37 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Margaret Grun Kibben, offered the following prayer:

Hear the cries of Your people, O Lord.

Out of the depths of their suffering, hear their voices, pleading for rescue from the hands of their tormentors for an end to the violence they endure from the hands of their oppressors and relief from the poverty they experience in both body and spirit.

Let Your ears be attentive to the pleas that rise to You from across the globe from the innocent men, women, and children who are caught in the

crossfire of the war in Ukraine and from the enemy's conscripted soldiers who are forced to fight a war that is not of their own making.

Hear the voices of those who dare to speak words of peace and reconciliation into the winds of war and silence the rhetoric of false claims to the hegemony of property and the control of Your people.

We wait for You, O Lord, to speak Your word. Countless wait on You to reach into their souls and give them reason to hope. More than those who wait in the darkness for the dawn, more than these, do we wait for Your power to redeem Your children.

In Your steadfast love, save us from ourselves and from our inequities.

In Your most holy name we pray.
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House the approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1 of rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Byrd, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 30.—An act to authorize major medical facility projects for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 101-509, the Chair, on behalf of the Majority Leader, announces the reappointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress:

Denise A. Hibay of New York.

NATIONAL AG WEEK

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, this week is National Ag Week. It is a time where America honors and gives thanks to her farmers, ranchers, and ag workers. Without their hard work, dedication, and ingenuity, our Nation would not enjoy the rich bounty of food they grow.